

JAMAICA NEGRO PROVERBS AND SAYINGS

COLLECTED AND
CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO SUBJECTS

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Folklore
KINGSTON, JAMAICA :

THE INSTITUTE OF JAMAICA : DATE TREE HALL.

Agents in London : H. Sotheran & Co., 140, Strand, and 37, Piccadilly, W.

1910.

D.L.V.

518261

PN6519

J2A5

"The words of the wise, and their dark sayings."

—PROVERBS i. 6.

"They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge."—PROVERBS viii. 9.

"A wise man who knows proverbs reconciles difficulties."

—YORUBA PROVERB.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Negro Proverbs of Jamaica, as of the rest of the West Indies, are divided into four classes : those that have their origin in Africa : those originating in the West Indies : those adapted from European proverbs : and those that are frankly European proverbs expressed in negro language.

Appended is a list of works giving examples of West India proverbs. Of these by far the most complete is the collection made by the Rev. James Speirs of Demerara, which numbers 1069. A comparison shows that several of the proverbs most often heard in Jamaica, *e.g.* *Greedy choke puppy* ; *Rocktone a riber bottom neber know sun hot* ; *when black man tief, him tief half a bit* ; *when bockra tief, him tief whole estate* ; *Ebery John Crow tink him own picknie white*, etc., are common to both colonies. The last named in the French colonies is rendered in patois—*Macaque pas jamais ka die iche li laide* (Monkey never says its young is ugly).

While this work was being prepared for the press, the Rev. Caleb Reynolds presented to the library of the Institute of Jamaica a manuscript list of 362 Jamaica proverbs collected by him, and from that some seventy-eight have been added to the present collection. But no collection of negro proverbs could hope to be exhaustive. As they improvise some verses to their songs as they sing, so the negroes improvise proverbs and proverbial sayings. For this reason one meets with two or three renderings of the same saying, and very often the same idea clothed in different words. Sometimes they are in direct opposition, as *Man mus' die, but wud neber die*, and *Wud mus' die, but man mus' lib*.

In the West Indies European proverbs are turned into meanings more readily understood of the people—*e.g.* *A cat may look at a king* becomes *Darg hab liberty fe watch gubnor*. Similarly, *Hard words break no bones* becomes *Cuss-cuss neber bore hole a me 'kin*, and *Les absents ont toujours tort* becomes *Behind darg, it is "Darg"* ; before darg, it is "*Mr. Darg*" ; or in the patois of the French Islands, *Dèièr chein cé "chein"* ; *dowant chein cé "Missier Chein."* Familiarity breeds contempt (which the Italian expresses by *Don't play with the bear if you don't want*

to be bitten) becomes in Jamaica, *If you play wid puppy, puppy lick you mout*; and *Honesty among thieves* is rendered by *Darg no nyam darg*. *Ebery man know wha' him own house a leak*, obviously is a rendering of the English proverb dating from the time when negroes wore no shoes to pinch their feet. *He laughs loudest who laughs last* becomes *Fus' laugh a no de ending*. *All is not gold that glitters* becomes *No ebery ting wha' got sugar a sweet*, which is especially applicable in the lands of the sugar-cane.

There are but comparatively few proverbs which can be traced to their African origin. Notes have been added where this is possible.

In Demerara, though not in Jamaica, the negroes have proverbs telling of elephants. These are obviously of African origin. In Jamaica there are no monkeys, but monkeys figure in many of their sayings; the explanation being no doubt the same. Tigers are also sometimes mentioned in their proverbs, as they are frequently in their Annancy stories.

Those proverbs that have frankly been taken from the English are of interest in showing the class of thought that appeals to the negro mind. In the same way, some Annancy stories of European origin have an interest second only to those of undoubted African source.

Some proverbs have one or two different renderings. Some say *Big words break nobody's skin*, others say *Big word neber break man jawbone*. Many phrases, it will be noted, are more or less Biblical in character.

In so far as they touch upon morals and manners, the proverbs of a race seldom display its good points. They are practically the race's criticisms of its own salient defects. If taken seriously, therefore, the proverbs of a race are apt to give an impression of its faults rather than its virtues. In the case of the West Indian negroes those defects on which most stress is laid are: hasty conclusions, improvidence, insincerity, greediness, want of foresight, interference, ingratitude, insolence, vanity, and presumption.

With the spread of education, the use of proverbs has a tendency to lessen, and the negroes display a certain amount of diffidence about using them, at all events before *bockra*. If asked the meaning of a somewhat obscure one, they will not infrequently plead ignorance. "Me no know," "Dat's only a sayin'." Some of them affect surprise, or even indignation, when a proverb is quoted against them, and will say "Hi! wha dis Bockra get all dem old time saying!" It seems fitting therefore that those which can be collected should be put on permanent record.

One sometimes hears it said of some proverbial saying that it is "not a true proverb." The first definition given of "Proverb," in the New English Dictionary—"a short pithy saying in common and recognized use"—seems

wide enough to include all the sayings printed in this collection, if one is a little lenient as to the value put upon "short." They are, at all events, all sententious and quaint, and interesting as illustrative of negro thought and character.

In the negro pronunciation of English words the initial *s* before a consonant is usually lost (*e.g.* 'tand for stand); *h* often disappears after *i* (*tink* for think); *him* stands for he or his; *for* (fe) often marks the infinitive mood; *in a* takes the place of in; *da* of be; *a* of is, and so on.

Thanks are due to Mr. W. P. Haskett Smith for kind assistance in the supplying of parallels.

It is possible that not a few negro proverbs and sayings may have escaped the notice of the collectors. They will gratefully receive notes of any such for a future edition.

LONDON, ENGLAND.

I. A.

KINGSTON, JAMAICA,
September, 1910.

F. C.

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JAMAICA NEGRO PROVERBS AND SAYINGS.

Alligator.*

1. You neber see pop-gun kill alligator.
Cf. Don't send a boy on a man's errand.
2. No cuss alligator long mout' till you cross riber.
Cf. Discretion is the better part of valour.
He laughs best who laughs last.
Don't hullo till you're out of the wood.
See No. 467.
3. When turtle come out o' pond an' tell you alligator hab sore yeye, belieb' him.
I.e. A turtle can give you trustworthy information about an alligator, or in the sense of "Tell that to the marines."
4. When fish come out o' sea an' tell you alligator hab feber, belieb' him.
A variant of No. 3.
The West African saying is, in Oji, "If an apopokiki from the bottom of the river says that the crocodile is sick, it will not be doubted." Or, in Accra, "If the didei leaves the river and says that the crocodile is sick, then it is truly sick."
5. Alligator lay egg but him no fowl.
I.e. Never view a subject from one point only.
Cf. All is not gold that glitters.
A man's not a horse for being born in a stable.
A' Stuart's no sib to the king.

Ants.

6. Ant follow fat, fat drown ant.
Shows the evil effects of greediness.
7. Ant follow fat, 'ooman follow man.
Ooman = woman.
8. If you no pop ant' belly you no know him hab gut.
By using pressure you can find out secrets.
See No. 686.
9. De fus' time ant tas'e molasses him wash him 'kin ina it.
Tas' = taste; 'kin = skin; ina' = in.
When poor people acquire wealth, they often at first make a ridiculous use of it, and ultimately kill themselves.
See No. 213.

* The crocodiles in Jamaica are commonly called alligators.

Axe.

10. Lilly axe can cut down big tree.

Lilly = little.

Cf. Little strokes fell great oaks. It also occurs in Latin, French, Portuguese and Dutch.

See No. 117.

Bag.

11. You neber see empty bag 'tan' up.

'Tan' = stand.

I.e. If you are hungry you cannot work.

Cf. A toom seck winna stan' upreest (Cumberland proverb).

Sacco vuoto no sta ritto (Italian: also German).

12. You neber see full bag ben'.

Ben' = bend.

Basket.

13. If neger hate you him gi' you basket fe carry water; but if you cleber, you put plaintain-leaf a bottom.

I.e. And then you are able to carry the water. Nothing is impossible to an ingenious person.

14. Ebery man hang him bonkra wha' him han' can ketch.

Bonkra (or bankra) = hand-basket.

Every man hangs his basket where his hand can reach it.

Cf. Cut your coat according to your cloth.

Bean.

15. Time neber too long fe bannabis bear bean.

Bannabis is a kind of bean: "bonavista."

One can accomplish one's object sooner or later.

Beggar.

16. Beggar beg from beggar him neber get rich.

Cf. Ex nihilo nihil fit.

You can't get blood out of a stone.

See Nos. 215 and 589.

Belly.

17. When belly full, jaw mus' 'top.

18. Belly full mek potato hab 'kin.

'Kin = skin.

When you are satisfied you are over-particular; if you are hungry you ignore trifles.

Cf. A colombe soûl sont cerises amères.

See No. 602.

19. When man belly full him bruk pot.

When one is well off one often forgets the future.

20. Full belly tell empty belly keep heart.

A satire on one who sympathizes but does not assist.

21. Hungry belly an' full belly no walk one pass.

Pass = road.

Used to differentiate between the condition of the rich man and the poor man.

Cf. It is ill talking between a full man and a fasting.

22. Willin' pickney hab him belly high, unwillin' pickney him belly flat.
Obliging persons make the most friends.
See No. 39.
23. Wha' sweet a mout' sometime hot a' belly.
Mout' = mouth. Hot a' belly = hurts in the belly.
First impressions are often wrong. Pleasant vices often lead to misery.
Cf. "Dulce etiam fugias fieri quod amarum potest" (Publ. Syr.).
Revelation x. 9.
24. Sometime 'tanding collar 'tan' top a empty belly.
'tan' = stands.
Applied to those who make pretence to greatness on no foundation.
Cf. Pride's chickens have bonny feathers but bony bodies.
25. Better belly fe bus' dan good ting fe 'pwoil.
Dan = than; fe = to; bus = burst; 'pwoil = spoil.
Used as an excuse for gluttony or greed.
26. Lef' man cocoa 'tick 'pon you belly rib.
Lef'-man cocoa is a special (very hard) kind of cocoa, which often causes indigestion.
Be careful in undertaking what has been rejected by others.

Better.

27. Better fe dem laugh after you when you right dan cry ober you when you wrong.

Bird.

28. Young bud no fly too furr.
Bud = bird; furr = far.
29. When bud fly too fas' him pass him nes'.
Cf. Much haste worse speed.
30. Dere is chance fe bud as well as fe gun.
Dere = there.
31. Play-'tone kill bud.
'tone = stone.
I.e. A random shot sometimes hits the mark.
Cf. Shot at the pigeon and killed the crow.
See No. 166.
32. Plenty gun-man no was'e shot 'pon blackbud.
Plenty gun-man = many shooters; was'e = waste.
There are sure to be some sensible persons in a crowd.
33. Young bud no know hungry time.

Blade.

34. If you get hole ob de blade mine how you draw
Hole = hold; mine = mind.
Advises caution in difficulties.

Blanket.

35. Big blanket mek man sleep late.
Luxury encourages idleness.

Bockra.

36. Bockra work neber' done.
Bockra (or buckra) = a white man.

Cf. Man's work lasts till set of sun.

Woman's work is never done.

Tusser (1550) has the same idea.

See No. 725.

Bottle.

37. When bottle hole rum, corn'tick get drunk.

Cornstick is often used instead of a cork.

Cf. Evil communications corrupt good manners.

Bowl.

38. Bowl go, packy come.

Packy = small calabash used as a bowl.

I.e. The result of poverty succeeding plenty.

Boy.

39. Good bwoy neber sleep hungry.

See No. 22.

Brag.

40. Two bit' neber braggin' as one fippenny.

Two bits (*i.e.* two $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ = $9d.$) never brag as much as one three-penny.

I.e. People who have grounds for display are often those who do not attempt it.

Bridge.

41. De bridge between laughin' and cryin' nɔ long.

Cf. Laugh at leisure, you may greet ere nicht.

Bucket.

42. Ebery day bucket go a well one day him bottom drop out.

This also occurs in Spanish (*Don Quixote*) and in 13th-century French.

Bull and Cow.

43. When man lib well, him go a paster go tell cow "how-dee."

How-dee = how-do-you-do.

Idle, useless practices are adopted by those well off.

Cf. Evil finds mischief for idle hands to do.

44. When bull ole him feed a fence side.

Ole = old, *i.e.* Caution comes with age.

See No. 702.

45. When bull ole him horn ben'.

Ben' = is bent.

46. When bull ole dem tun him ina cow paster.

Ina = into.

47. When bull ole you tek hog meat ti-tietie him.

Hog meat ti-tie = stem of wild convolvulus used for tying.

Age often humiliates those once strong.

48. When cow' tail cut off, God-a-mighty brush fly.

Cf. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.

49. Cow can't wear him tail ina paster fe you.

Describes an interfering and meddlesome person.

50. No fe want o' tongue mek cow no talk.

It is not for the want of a tongue that a cow does not talk.

I.e. It is not always for the want of power that one does not speak.

See No. 553.

51. When horse dead cow get fat.
Because there will be more grass for it to eat in the pasture.
Cf. It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good.
52. When cow dead, mule laugh.
Because there will be more grass in the pasture.
53. A de quiet cow de butcher kill.
Cf. The willing horse is driven to death.
See No. 408.
54. Cow dat b'long to butcher, neber say him berry well.
55. Cow know weak fence fe jump over.
See No. 691.
56. When cow can't get water fe wash him pickney face, him tek him tongue.
Cf. Mater artium necessitas.
57. You catch cow by him horn, but man by him wud.
Wud = word.
58. Little billy-goat hab beard but big bull hab none.
Outward appearance is not always an indication of real importance.
See No. 370.
59. Man hab cow him look fe milk.
Cf. He who pays the piper calls the tune.
60. Crass cow keep him tail close.
Crass = Cross.
61. When bull begin fe dig grung you better look fe tree.
I.e. Means to escape.
Grung = the ground.
62. You neber see kickin' cow widout kickin' calf.
Cf. Like father like son.
63. Saucy cow draw de wain tongue.
Tongue = pole.
A vicious or troublesome cow is put to the hardest work close to the cart.
Used as a threat to an impudent person.
64. You can't sit down 'pon cow back, so cuss cow 'kin.
I.e. You must not abuse that from which you are gaining advantages.
65. You care mauger cow, a you him buck.
If you care for a meagre cow it is you she will butt.
Said of an ungrateful person.
See No. 223
66. If you lub de cow you mus' lub de calf.
Lub = love.
Cf. Love me love my dog.
67. When cow mek fight horse no bisness dey.
Dey = there.
The horse having no horns had better keep away.
68. Cow don't bisness in a horse-play.
See No. 627.
69. Cow dead him lef' trouble gi' cow-'kin.
I.e. When a cow is dead its skin succeeds to the troubles of life, and continues to be worked as leather.

70. Cow dead, but him lef him 'kin fe 'tink.
 'Tink = Stink.
71. Bull horn neber too heaby fe bull head.
 Heaby = heavy.
72. Two bull can't 'tan' a one pen.
Cf. "Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere" (*Shakespeare*,
Henry IV., v. 4).
73. When bull foot bruk, him nyam wid monkey.
 Foot bruk = leg is broken. Him nyam = he eats.
 Poverty makes one acquainted with strange companions.
74. Cow no dead him wi' shake him tail.
Cf. While there is life there is hope.
75. Cunny cow nyam peas, lef' leaf.
 The cunning cow eats peas when it can get them and despises leaves and
 grass.
 When you have a choice of two things take that which is most to
 your advantage. The cow's cunning perhaps also lies in leaving the
 leaves to cover the traces of her mischief.

Bush.

76. Lilly bush sometime' grow better dan big tree.
I.e. Small beginnings are not to be despised.
77. Bush hab yeye.
 The bush has eyes.
Cf. No. 704.
 It also occurs in Hebrew, old French and English.
78. Bush hab yeye, and 'tump wear hat.
 'Tump = stump.
Cf. "Conscience doth make cowards of us all" (*Shakespeare*).

Butter.

79. Butter fe massa an callalu fe massa.
I.e. Both things belonging to one person, there is no occasion to spare one for
 the other. Callalu is a vegetable like spinach.
80. Neber buy rancid butter fe feed ram-puss.
 Ram-puss = tom-cat.

Buy.

81. Quattie buy trouble, hundred pound can't pay fe it.
 Quattie = 1½d., *i.e.* a quarter of sixpence. In the earlier days it ran, "Black
 dog (a small coin), etc."
 Great troubles often arise from small causes.
Cf. Penny wise, pound foolish.

Calabash.

82. Bruk calabash, bring new one.
 If you destroy anything you must make it good.
83. Packy neber bear punkin.
 Packy = calabash. Punkin = pumpkin.
 Applied to an impossibility.
See Nos. 88 and 714.

Callalu.

84. Callalu a swear fe ole 'ooman, ole 'ooman a swear fe callalu.
 A swear fe = is swearing at; ole 'ooman = old woman.
See Note to No. 79.

Call.

85. Me no call you, no come.

I.e. Do not intrude where you are not wanted.**Candle.**

86. See de candle light, befo' you blow out de matches.

See No. 708.**Cane.**

87. Cane no grow like grass.

Cane (= sugar-cane) requires careful attention. Education and prosperity are not easily attained.**Cashew.**

88. Cusheew neber bear guava.

The cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*) is a West Indian fruit tree.*Cf.* "Do men gather figs of thorns?" (S. Matthew vii. 16).*See* Nos. 83 and 714.**Cat.***See* Puss.**Catch.**

89. No ketchie, no habie.

If you don't catch you won't have.

90. If you can't ketch quashie you ketch him shut.

Shut = shirt.*I.e.* If you can't catch quashie, catch some one belonging to him.

91. If I don't ketch you a moonshine, you don't ketch me a dark night.

If I can't catch you when it is easy, you needn't expect to catch me when it is difficult.**Centipedes.**

92. Neber call centipede name.

They say, if you name it, it will disappear and you will have no chance of killing it. It is wise to keep your own counsel.

Chain.

93. Not ebery chain you hear a fe rollin' calf.

A fe = belongs to.*Rolling calf* = a ghostly calf which is supposed to drag a chain.*I.e.* Do not jump to a conclusion too hastily.**Chip.**

94. De chip neber fall too furr from de block.

Choose.

95. When buryin' dey a' you door, you no pick an' choose grave-digger.

I.e. When in trouble you are not over-particular.**Church.**

96. You are in de right church but in de wrong pew.

I.e. You are partly right and partly wrong.**Clothes.**

97. Clothes cover character.

Vestis virum facit. It also occurs in German and Dutch.

98. Cut your coat by your cloth, and mark twice before you cut once.

It occurs in English, French and Dutch.

99. No hang you clothes all 'pon one nail.

Cf. Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

Hang not all your bells on one horse.

Cloud.

100. When cloud-shadder come, sun no set.

Cockroach.

101. A who fool befo' fowl but cockroach?

Because the cockroach is utterly helpless. The excuse of one who is helpless not through his own fault, but through his inferior position.

102. Wha' cockroach hab, a it him gib him fren'.

The poor are charitable to each other according to their ability.

103. Cockroach neber lick turn 'tick.

I.e. Because it is too hot. Turn 'tick = stick used to stir food when it is being cooked.

104. No mine how cockroach drunk, him no walk pas' fowl-yard.

A cockroach is never so drunk that he walks past the fowl-house.

I.e. The greatest folly has its limits.

See No. 526.

105. When cockroach gi' party, him no ax fowl.

Ax = ask.

I.e. A man does not willingly put himself in the enemy's power. Used as a warning to those who try to push themselves amongst those who will prey on them.

106. Cockroach neber right before fowl.

I.e. No plea avails before a prejudiced judge.

107. When cockroach get in a trouble, him well glad fe run go hide a fowl-house.

When in great need one risks applying to an enemy for assistance.

Cf. Any port in a storm.

108. When chicken tie up, cockroach want explanation.

I.e. When your natural enemy seems to be incapacitated, be suspicious.

Coco-head.

109. When coco-head meet rich soil, him root bore grung.

The coco is *Colocasia antiquorum*.

Coco-head = the part planted. Bore grung = bores into the ground.

A person placed in a favourable position can establish himself firmly.

110. Big no' door, no hab coco-head a barrel.

Big no door = a bumptious person. Big as a door (no door is so big).

An arrogant person does not prosper.

Cocoa.

111. When cocoa ripe him mus' bus'.

Cocoa = *Theobroma cacao*. Bus' = burst. Applied to rich persons who make a display and come to grief.

Come.

112. A "come-in" is nothing.

I.e. The welcome of words is cheap.

113. "Come see me" is one ting, but "come lib wid me" is anuder.

I.e. One learns by experience of living with a person what mere acquaintance will not teach. *Or* the former is an empty civility, the latter a valuable offer.

Cook.

114. Cook lick him finger.

The mediæval nickname for a cook was "Lickfinger."

Cf. A bad cook licks his own fingers.

Cornpiece.

115. You get in a darg corn-piece.

"Darg corn-piece" is said to be a corruption of "quandary."

You have got into a trouble from which it is not easy to get out.

Cost.

116. De cos' tek way from de tas'e.

Cos' = cost; *tas'e* = taste.

Cf. Le cont en ôte le gout.

Cotton-tree.

117. Cotton-tree eber so big, lilly axe cut him.

See No. 10.

118. When cotton-tree tumble down, nanny-goat jump ober him.

In reduced circumstances one is liable to be insulted by those who would not dare do it before.

Cf. Mortuo leoni et lepores insultant.

Cousins.

119. Too much cousin bruk shop.

I.e. Too many relatives impoverish a man.

Covetous.

120. Cubbitch fe one plum, you lose de whole bunch.

Cubbitch = covetous.

Cow.

See Bull.

Coward.

121. Coward man keep soun' bone.

Cf. He that fights and runs away may live to fight another day.

122. If you coward fe yeye you neber nyam head.

See Nos. 259 and 737.

Crabs.*

123. When crab walk too much him los' him claw.

Him los' = he loses.

Cf. A rolling stone gathers no moss.

124. When crab walk too much him go a cutacoo.

Cutacoo is a basket, made of withes, hung at one's side.

I.e. A wandering, restless person soon gets into trouble.

125. When crab no hab hole him neber get fat.

I.e. A steady home life is best.

See No. 642.

* These proverbs refer to land-crabs.

126. Unwillin' crab neber get fat.

An indolent person never prospers.

See No. 130.

127. De reason crab no hab head, a because him hab too good a 'tomack.

Applied to a person whose generosity has outrun his discretion; or to one better fed than taught.

See No. 131.

128. Crab say him don't trus' no shadow after dark.

Land-crabs are generally caught at night.

129. Crab say no trus' shadow: when you tink it a shadow it a man.

130. Lazy crab neber fat.

I.e. Those who are lazy do not thrive.

See No. 126.

131. Consequential mek crab no hab head.

It is because it is consequential that the crab has no head.

132. Lilly crab hole 'pwoil big race-horse.

Lilly = little.

The horse stumbles in the crab-hole.

133. If you don't walk a night you won't hear crab cough.

A satirical proverb quoted against those who boast of the knowledge they have acquired in their travels.

See No. 592.

134. Only trabeller larn dat crab catch cold

Crooked.

135. Crooked pass hard fe fin'.

Pass = road; fe fin' = to find.

Cunning.

136. Cunny better dan 'trong.

I.e. Cunning is better than strength.

Cf. "Engin mieulx vault que force" (*Rabelais*).

137. Cunny fe me, a foolish fe you.

A foolish = it is folly.

Used by a boasting man.

138. Two cunny man can't share three bits.

A bit = $\frac{1}{4}d$.

However clever they may be, they cannot divide this amount into two equal parts. In the old days there were no farthings.

139. If dere was no fool, cunny man couldn't lib.

Cf. If fools went not to market bad wares would not be sold.

140. Cunny better dan obeah.

Obeah = West Indian witchcraft.

Curse.

141. Cuss-cuss no bore hole in a me 'kin.

Cuss-cuss = cursing; kin = skin.

142. Cuss-cuss break no bone.

Cf. Hard words break no bones.

See No. 420.

143. Cuss-cuss no load 'pon de head.

144. Cuss-cuss like chicken come home fe roost.

This occurs in Chaucer; also in Greek.

Cutacoo.

145. Cutacoo 'pon man back yearry wha' him massa no yearry.

Cutacoo = a wallet of basket work; yearry = hears.

A dependant often hears calumnious remarks against his master made behind his back.

146. Cutacoo full, 'ooman laugh.

When the wallet is full the woman laughs.

When you get into good circumstances your wife is pleased with you.

Cry.

147. Any cry wi' do fe buryin'.

I.e. The dead cannot criticize the quality of the cry.

Daddy.

148. More secret in a de world dan de daddie' know: me know wha' me mammy nebber know.

Refers to increase of knowledge due to experience and education.

Cf. "We are better men than our fathers" (*Homer*).

149. One daddy fe twenty picknie, but twenty picknie no fe one daddy.

The West African version is, "I have not begotten all that call me Sire."

Cf. "It is a wise father that knows his own child" (*Shakespeare*, *Merchant of Venice*, ii. 2).

Dance.

150. Larn fe dance home before you go 'broad.

See No. 474.

151. Ye tune you a play no de tune me a dance.

See Nos. 473 and 618.

152. 'Tan' an' see, no pwoil dance.

I.e. You will not spoil a game by merely looking on.

153. If you go a tump-a-foot dance, you must dance tump-a-foot.

Cf. Do at Rome as the Romans do.

Day.

154. Ebery day no Christmas, an' ebery day no rainy day.

155. Ebery day not Sunday.

Daylight.

156. Daylight show trough lilly keyhole.

Lilly = little.

Death.

157. Dead better dan punish.

Dead = death; punish = punishment.

158. Dead hog no care fe hot water.

No care fe = does not mind [the hot water used to scald off the bristles].

159. If Mr. Go-'way no come, Mr. Dead wi' come.

You had better go away before something worse befalls you.

Debt.

160. Long debt better dan ole grudge.

161. Poun' wort' a fret neber pay quattie wort' a debt.

Quattie = 1½d.

Cf. A pound of care won't pay an ounce of debt.

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Devil.

162. If you get your han' in a debil mout' tek time tek it out.
Be careful how you deal with an unscrupulous person; and act cautiously in getting out of a difficulty.
163. If you yearry debil a come, clear de way.
Yearry = hear.
164. I eat wid de debil, but I cautious a him.
A = of.
Cf. "Behoveth him a ful long spoon
That schal ete with a Fend" (*Chaucer, Squiere's Tale*, 10,916). It also occurs in Danish.
165. It hard fe keep out de debil, but it wus fe dribe him out.
Wus = worse; dribe = drive.
Cf. Better keep the deil oot than hae to turn him oot (*Scotch*).
166. Accidental shot may kill Satan.
See No. 81.

Do.

167. Do-fe-do no harm.
Do-fe-do = tit for tat.
168. Do-fe-do mek neger come a Jamaica.

Dog.

169. When ashes cole darg sleep in dey.
Cole = cold.
I.e. Circumstances alter cases.
170. Befo' darg go widout him supper, him nyam cockroach.
Nyam = eat.
171. When darg mauger him head big.
Mauger = meagre.
Applied to a poor but pompous person.
172. When darg mauger him yeye red.
Cf. Misery makes him cry and thus get red eyes.
173. If darg no fe you, no cut him aise.
Fe you = belongs to you; aise = ears.
174. Greedy puppy neber fat.
175. Greedy choke puppy.
Greediness chokes a puppy. Avaricious people often over-reach themselves.
The West African version is "A huge morsel chokes a child."
176. Darg dont nyam darg.
Cf. Honour among thieves. At Accra they say "A dog does not bite a dog till blood comes out." In Hausaland they say "Does dog eat dog?" The Danes say "Wolves don't eat wolves." The Germans say "The wolf does not satisfy his hunger with wolf's flesh." The Scots say "Hawks winna peck oot hawk's een. It also occurs in Latin, of Varro.
177. Darg say sooner dan buy nankeen fe sixpence him wi' gi' doubloon fe bone.
Doubloon, an old Spanish coin = £3 4s.; Nankeen (*i.e.* a species of cotton cloth formerly much used in the West Indies) is of no use to a dog, a bone is.
I.e. Spend your money on what is really of use to you.

178. Hog run fe him life, darg run fe him character.

I.e. Different causes produce the same effect.

179. Darg drink water fe-you, fe-you.

Fe-you, Fe-you is the imitation of the lapping sound.

180. Play wid puppy, puppy lick you mout'.

Cf. Familiarity breeds contempt.

In Hausaland they say "Better sleep hungry than play (or trifle) with a boy"; and Captain Merrick adds, "This saying is constantly heard. It shows the native objection to being too familiar with inferiors. They invariably take advantage of it."

Cf. Bourd not with Bawty (Lowland Scotch). Bourd = jest. Bawty is the name of a dog.

See No. 528.

181. When you sleep wid darg you ketch him flea.

This occurs in English, Italian, French, Spanish, and Danish.

Cf. Evil communications corrupt good manners.

182. You neber see darg chaw razor.

Cf. Don't play with edged tools.

183. Lub me lub me darg.

Love me, love my dog.

184. 'Cornful darg nyam dutty pudden.

Cf. Dainty dogs eat dirty puddings.

185. Better fe fowl come see darg dead dan fe darg come see fowl dead.

I.e. Better for the oppressor to die than the oppressed.

The reverse is also used: "Better fe dog say 'fowl dead,' dan fe fowl say 'dog dead.'"

186. Ebery darg know him dinner time, ebery puss him four o'clock.

187. Ebery darg hab him day, but puss hab Sunday.

I.e. The dog is petted when he goes out with his master; the cat has his chance when the master is at home on Sunday. Every one has his chance in turn.

188. When darg hab too much owner him sleep widout supper.

Cf. What is everybody's business is nobody's business.

189. It' hard fe get butter out of darg' troat.

This occurs in English.

190. When darg nyam egg him neber 'top.

I.e. The vicious do not readily give up their vice.

See No. 214.

191. Behind darg it is "darg," before darg it is "Mr. Darg."

192. Darg say him won't fret if him mumma dead, so long as afternoon rain no come.

I.e. A selfish person only cares about what concerns his own petty interest, regardless of others.

193. When darg hab shinin' teet' him laugh after butcher.

I.e. His shining teeth show that he has plenty of food and is independent of the butcher.

194. Darg hab four foot, but him can't walk four different pass.

Pass = ways.

195. Darg hab four foot, but him only go one way at a time.

196. The slow darg nyam him massa bone.

I.e. He waits patiently till his master has finished.

See No. 320.

d. trot him no know wha' da follow him.

198. Foolish man no know how darg laugh.

An excuse for merriment, the source of which is not known to others.

199. Darg wake a marnin' and say him pr'yer, an' say to-day eider blow or bone.

I.e. Dependence upon Providence makes one resigned to any fate.

Cf. Monkey's allowance—more kicks than halfpence.

200. If you lib wid darg you larn fe howl.

Cf. Evil communication corrupt good manners.

Live with the lame and learn to limp.

201. Darg no howl if him hab bone.

Cf. A good dog never barketh about a bone (Scotch).

202. You can't tie darg wid link a sausage.

203. When dresser fall down, mauger darg laugh.

Cf. It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

204. Lilly darg always mannish a him massa door-mout'.

See No. 218.

205. Ebery darg tink himself lion in a him massa yard.

Cf. A cock on his own dunghill.

It occurs in Latin, Spanish and French.

206. Darg don't bark when you bruk him back.

207. When you can't get dog fe bark you mus' tek sheep.

208. Dog neber los' him way.

209. Darg lib well, him trouble cow a pass.

A pass = in the way.

210. When darg lib well him trouble cow, cow kick him.

I.e. Luxury and idleness lead into danger.

211. Darg say befo' him plant yam fe look like masquita' foot, him satisfy fe tun beggar.

Fe tun = to turn.

Might be used by a labourer who would rather beg than work for what he considered too small wages.

212. Darg bark neber frighten moon

213. De fus' time darg tas'e fowl egg him nyam de shell an' all.

See Nos. 9 and 384.

214. When darg once nyam fowl egg him can't lef' off.

See No. 190.

215. Darg beg from beggar him neber get rich.

See No. 16.

216. Darg say him won't work, him wi' si' down and look, for him must get a libin'.

Libin = living.

217. De 'tick dat flog de black darg will whip de white.

'Tick = stick.

Cf. What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

218. Darg wid bruk foot find him massa door.

I.e. A person in misfortune appeals to his relatives.

See Nos. 204 and 344.

219. De darg dat carry bone come, wi' carry bone go.
 The dog that fetches a bone will carry away another.
I.e. One who brings a lie or scandal can also take one away.
Cf. The dog that fetches will carry.
220. Darg sweat, but long hair cober it.
 This is contrary to physiology. It is applied to one who is outwardly calm and does not show his misfortunes.
221. You see darg hidin' a road wid one foot bruk, tek 'tick bruk de toder one.
 If you see a dog hiding on the road with one leg broken, take a stick and break another. Ungrateful people should not be helped in distress.
Cf. Hit a man when he is down.
222. Bad name neber kill darg.
 Never mind the scandal of this world. The opposite of "Give a dog a bad name and hang him."
223. If you sorry fe mauer darg, him wi' tun round an' bite you.
 Ingratitude towards those who help and sympathize with the distressed and poor.
See No. 65.
224. If darg hab money him buy cheese.
See No. 594.
225. Puppy nyam ratta done, him cut capoose 'pon John crow.
I.e. When a puppy has finished devouring a rat, he cuts capers on the vulture. After a first success one is apt to rate oneself too highly.
226. Muzzle darg no ketch rat.
 Muzzle = muzzled.
Cf. The muzzled cat is no good mouser. It also occurs in Italian.

Dollar.

227. Silver dollar better dan fambly.
 Famby = relatives.
 The reverse of "Count siller after your kin." *See* No. 261.

Donkey.

228. Ebery time donkey bray him 'member someting.
 'Member someting, *i.e.* a thought crosses his mind. He is not such a fool as we think.
229. Donkey gallop soon ober.
Cf. Short and sweet like a donkey's gallop.
230. When jackass carry salt him lick de hamper.
231. When you go a donkey house don't talk bout aise.
 Aise = ears.
Cf. Name not a rope in the house of one that was hanged. It also occurs in French, Italian, German, Portuguese, and in the Spanish of "Don Quixote."
232. Jackass say de wull no lebel.
 Wull = world.
 It is the poor who know the difficulties of life.
233. Ebery day you beat donkey, one day him wi' kick you
234. Wha' hutful like a donkey trow you down?
 Hutful = hurtful.
I.e. It is very humiliating to be foiled by a fool.
235. When jackass dead, bees tek him backbone mek honey.

236. No eberybody ride him jackass one fashion.

Don't care.

237. Don't kyar keep big house.

Kyar = care.

Drink.

238. Dry drink better dan sarmon.

Sarmon = sermon.

Said by one who does not appreciate being lectured for a fault.

Driver.

239. Driber fum him wife fus'.

The driver was the overseer of a gang of slaves in a field. The driver flogs his wife first.

I.e. If you would do real justice, favour no one.

See No. 559.

Drum.

240. No wait till drum beat before you grine you axe.

Grine = grind.

I.e. Be prepared for all eventualities.

241. When drum done play, Jackie done dance.

I.e. Work will stop when the inducement ceases.

Duck.

See also under Fowl.

242. No set hungry duck fe watch corn.

See Nos. 350 and 600.

243. All duck no dabble in a one hole.

Duppy.

244. Duppy know who fe frighten.

Duppy = ghost.

People will only injure those who they know cannot retaliate.

Cf. Freits follow those who look to them (*Scotch*).

Eat.

245. No ebery ting good fe eat good fe talk.

See No. 674.

246. Ebery bittle fe eat, no ebery 'tory fe talk.

Bittle = victuals; 'tory = story.

I.e. Do not talk too freely about your private affairs.

247. Nyam-nyam wi' full you belly, but breeze can't full you.

248. Nyam some, lef' some 'member tomorra.

I.e. Have forethought.

Education.

249. Studderation beat education.

Study is better than education.

Eggs.

250. Dere is reason fe roas' egg as well as fe bwoil dem.

Cf. There's reason in the roasting of eggs.

251. If you eat egg you mus' bruk de shell.

Cf. You cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs.

It also occurs in Spanish.

252. Darg wha neber see egg, when him see egg-shell him say a egg.

I.e. An ignorant person makes mistakes.

Eyes.

253. When yeye see, mout' talk.

254. Wha' yeye don't see, mout' can't talk.

255. When yeye no see, mout' no talk.

256. When yeye meet yeye man 'fraid

See Nos. 121 and 737.

257. When six yeye meet 'tory done.

The intervention of a third person stops many a story.

258. Yeye shame yeye.

259. You 'fraid fe yeye, you neber nyam head.

If you are afraid of the eye, you will never eat the head. If you regard too much the good opinion of any one you will never prosper.

Face.

260. Him face fabour foo-foo.

Fabour = resembles. Foo-foo is plaintain boiled to a kind of porridge which becomes crackled and wrinkled as it cools.

Family.

261. Bad fambly better dan empty pig-sty.

I.e. It is better to be ashamed of your family than to be poor.

See No. 227.

262. Eat fambly bittle, but no cut fambly 'tory.

Bittle = victuals; 'tory = story

I.e. Accept hospitality of a family, but do not meddle in family gossip.

Far.

263. 'Tan' furr see better.

If you stand far off you will see better.

Fast.

264. You run too fas', you run two time.

Cf. Much haste, worse speed.

Haste makes waste.

See Nos. 463 and 475.

265. You see s'mody run fas', tek time.

S'mody = somebody.

Cf. Slow and steady wins the race.

Fat.

266. Fat no fowl.

I.e. Fat as a fowl—no fowl is so fat.

Fields.

267. De best fiel' hab weed.

Fiel' = field.

Cf. Keine Rosen ohne Dornen.

"The richest soil produces the rankest weeds" (*Plutarch*, Life of Coriolanus).

Figs.

268. Bruise' fig mek sweet dish.

Bruised figs make a sweet dish.

Finger.

269. Finger neber say "look here," him say "look yonder."
I.e. People do not usually point out their own faults.
270. Lilly finger say "look here," big tumb say "look yonder."
 People are quicker at discerning other people's faults than their own.
271. One finger can't ketch louse.
 One always needs assistance.
 The African version is, "A man does not take one finger and take out an arrow."
272. Finger 'tink you can't cut i' trow 'way.
 If your finger stinks you can't cut it off and throw it away.
I.e. If your relatives are ever so bad you should not cast them off.
Cf. Don't cut off your nose to spite your face.
273. To do lilly, better dan pint finger.
 Pint = to point.
I.e. Even a little help is better than mere criticism.
Cf. Example is better than precept.
 Weniger Rath und viele Hände.
 Mickle ado and little help.

Finished.

274. You no done grow, so no laugh after long man.
 You have not done growing, so do not laugh at a tall man.
 See Nos. 2, 467, and 492.
275. You no done breed, so no laugh after you grannie.

Fippence.

276. You see fippence you know how dollar mek.
 Fippence = three pence in value. Five pence currency equalled three pence sterling.

Fire.

277. If you no go a man fireside, you no know how much fire 'tick bwoil him pot.
 Old habits are not hard to revive.
278. Ole fire-'tick no hard fe ketch.
 Old habits are not hard to revive.
279. When fire an' water mek fren', anybody can lib.
 See No. 447.

Fish and Fishing.

280. Ebbery day a fishing-day, but no ebbery day fe ketch fish.
 Reward does not always follow labour.
281. Ebbery haul a de net no ketch June fish.
 June fish is a large and valuable fish.
282. Fisherman neber say him fish 'tink.
 'Tink (here) = stinks.
Cf. No man cries stinking fish.
283. Cock-a-benny tun yellow-tail.
 Tun = turn. Cock-a-benny is a common fish; yellow-tail, a fish of greater value.
 Applies to a poor person who has put on fine clothes.
284. Fry de big fish fust, de little one after.
 Attend first to the most important matter.

285. All kind of fish eat man, only shark get blame.

A man with a bad character is always suspected.

Cf. Give a dog a bad name, and hang him.

Fleas.

286. Darg flea tell him pickney him musn't say him dead till him ketch 'pon de finger nail.

Cf. While there is life there is hope.

287. Flea say him would a rader man wid two yeye fe ketch him dan blind man fe hold him.

288. If flea bite you, you no 'cratch?

Isn't it natural to show annoyance at injury?

289. When flea go foragin' him say to him gramma get dinna fe me eben dough you yearry two finger nail ketch me.

I.e. Do not believe all you hear, but hope for the best and prepare accordingly.

Fly.

290. Sweet mout' fly follow coffin go a hole.

I.e. A warning that the pursuit of luxury may go too far and lead to ruin.

Follow.

291. Follow me you lose de pass.

If you follow me you will lose the road.

Fool.

292. De great fool is proud as darg wid two tail.

293. "Good bwoy" a nickname fe fool.

Bwoy = boy.

Cf. Flattery is the food of fools.

See No. 363.

294. One fool no fool, but two fool a fool.

I.e. He must be foolish who is not taught by one experience.

In Accra they say "Nobody is twice a fool."

Cf. It is shameful to trip twice over the same stone (Greek).

295. Nonsense man eat soup wid fork, eat rice wid pin, eat parch' corn an' lick him finger.

See No. 433.

Foot.

296. One foot lay cloth, toder foot call company.

I.e. It is not always the person who provides the meal who invites the company.

297. De foot ob de owner is manure fe de fiel'.

Fiel' = field.

Cf. "The master's eye makes the horse fat" (*Plutarch*).

It also occurs in Aristotle.

298. Cloven foot can wear polish boot.

Polish = polished.

299. Tired foot always say pass long.

I.e. All work is tedious to the unwilling.

Cf. Bad workmen always find fault with their tools.

300. Foot no swear 'gainst pass.

Cf. It is no use of kicking against the pricks.

301. If foot miss pass him can fine him, if mout' miss pass him can't fine him.

Pass = road; fine = find; mout' = mouth.

Shows the folly of imprudent language.

302. Half-a-foot dey ebberywha.

Half-a-foot is everywhere. The faults of people are to be found wherever you go.

303. Four-foot no always ketch train.

I.e. It is not always those who have the most advantages that fare best in the end.

See No. 194.

Fowls.

304. Fowl dream say him hab gout a him foot, same time when him wake a nuttin but dutty.

A fowl dreams that he has gout in his foot, when he wakes he finds it is only dirt on it.

I.e. We often exaggerate our grievances and afterwards find them to be unreal.

305. Yaller snake an' fowl no companion.

I.e. One should not associate with one's enemies.

See No. 110.

306. Fowl nyam done, him rub him mout' 'pon grung.

When a fowl has finished eating it rubs its mouth on the ground and shows good manners and gratitude.

307. Sensay fowl no cry fe fedder, but him cry fe bittle, for if him hab bittle him fedder wi' grow.

Bittle = victuals; sensay fowl = a fowl with ruffled feathers.

I.e. Life is more important than the keeping up of appearances; for if life be granted appearances may be regained.

308. Sensay fowl no want fedder, but him want corn.

Appearances are not essential to existence.

309. Fowl tread 'pon him chicken, but him no tread too hard.

I.e. Affection and consideration mitigate punishment that is needful.

The West African version is "The foot of a fowl does not kill its chicken."

310. Hen neber mash him chicken too hot.

Mash = tread on; hot = hard.

Those who are interested in you will not harm you even though they reprove you.

311. When fowl merry, hawk ketch him chicken.

Said also of pigeons. When one is prosperous one should guard against trouble.

See No. 327.

312. Fowl fedder no hit darg too hard.

I.e. A contemptuous rejoinder to impudent threats.

313. When fowl hab teet'.

The African version is "I will pay thee when fowls cut their teeth," *i.e.* the Greek Kalends.

314. Hungry fowl wake soon.

315. Fowl sleep, but duck walk.
Ducks can be driven after dark, but chicken cannot.
See No. 317.
316. Black fowl can lay white egg.
Has many meanings—*e.g.* Good may arise out of evil; Unexpected events may occur; Never judge prematurely and severely.
Cf. Noire geline pond blanc œuf.
317. Duck an' fowl feed togeder, but dem no roos' togeder.
I.e. Acquaintanceship does not necessarily lead to great intimacy.
See No. 315.
318. If big breeze wi' blow 'way anchor, wha' you tink a fowl fedder?
Fedder = feathers.
I.e. If the great suffer from calamities (such as a cyclone), how much more must the poor suffer?
319. When breeze no blow you no see fowl back.
I.e. It is exceptional circumstances which reveal character.
320. Cock no know how fe watch chicken, but him know how fe nyam corn.
I.e. He is unable or unfit to do the work, but is ready for the pay.
321. Fowl wi' swear to him egg, but him can't swear to him pickney.
I.e. You can be certain about the present, but not about the future.
Cf. "It is a wise father that knows his own child" (*Shakespeare, Merchant of Venice*, ii. 2).
322. Ebery time fowl lay egg, him try fe tell de whole wull.
I.e. A bragging person makes much ado about nothing.
323. Cock can't ride 'pon horseback dough him hab 'pur.
'Pur = spurs.
I.e. A special gift will not make you competent for everything.
324. Hen 'gree fe hatch duck egg, but him no 'gree fe tek duck-pickney fe swim.
'Gree = agree.
I.e. Even with a complacent person there is a limit to some things.
325. Far-away fowl hab fine fedder.
Cf. Distance lends enchantment to the view.
"Longinqua Sectamur" (*Pliny*).
Far awa' fowls hae aye fair feathers (*Scotch*).
326. When fowl drink water him say "tank God," when man drink water, him say nuttin.
Fowls always lift their heads after drinking.
See No. 329.
327. When fowl merry, him head in a pot.
See No. 311.
328. Fowl 'cratch up too much dutty, him run de risk a findin' him gramma 'keleton.
Cratch = scratch. 'Kkeleton = skeleton.
329. Chicken 'member God when him drink.
I.e. Lifts up its head. Used as an incentive to thankfulness and reverence.
See No. 326.
330. Fowl da a basket listen fe himself.
I.e. If you are hidden you can hear what others are saying; or, when in difficulty you must try to help yourself.

331. When cock crow fas', dawn soon come.

Fas' = fast.

332. Young cock crow after de ole one.

The Dutch version is "Als de ouden fien so singen de jongen." It also occurs in English, Scotch, German and Danish.

333. Cock mout' kill cock.

Applied to the evil effects of jealousy and gossip.

334. "Cousin fowl" bwoil good soup.

Bwoil = boil.

People will not hesitate to make use even of relations

Friend.

335. Good fren' better dan money in a pocket.

A good friend is better than money in the pocket.

336. Fren' no so easy fe fine as fe lose?

Fine = Find.

Cf. A friend is not so soon gotten as lost.

337. When you quarrel wid you fren', den you know how much dem know 'bout you.

Frog.

338. If you no want eat frog, no play wid snake.

Gardener.

339. Gardener is neber miser to him massa.

Gentleman.

340. You wait 'pon gentleman you wear blue coat.

I.e. If you serve people who are honourable you will be certain of a reward.

Give.

341. Gib a ting' and 'tek a ting', a bad man playting.

I.e. It is the trifling of a bad man to give and take back a thing.

Cf. Give a thing, take a thing,
That's an old man's plaything.

Goat.

342. Good nature mek nanny-goat bawl out a do'.

Bawl out a do' = cry out of doors.

I.e. Many persons have turned themselves out of house and home through kindness to others.

343. Goat no go a war, but him send him 'kin.

'Kin = skin. I.e. As drum-head.

344. When ram-goat foot bruk him fin' him massa door.

Foot = leg; fin' = find.

I.e. Some people never care about their friends until they are in trouble.
See Nos. 204 and 218.

345. Goat feed wha' him tie.

A goat feeds where it is tied; i.e. Adapts itself to its surroundings. This occurs in French.

346. If you wan' milk, feed de goat.

347. Wha' de goat go, de kid follow.
Cf. Like father, like son.
348. When ram-goat run after you, look out.
349. If ole 'ooman dey a fireside, ram-goat won't hang himself.
I.e. If you have a wife your animals will not hang themselves where they are tethered.
350. Neber mek goat trustee fe breadnut tree.
 Never put temptation in the way of a doubtful character.
Cf. "Ovum lupo commisti" (*Terence*).
"Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?" (*Juvenal*).
See Nos. 242, 600.
351. Goat say him hab wool, sheep say him hab hair.
 Secret envy makes each pretend to possess what the other has.
Cf. "Optat ephippia bos" (*Horace*, *Epistles*, 1, 14, 43).
352. Nanny-goat neber 'cratch him back till him see wall.
I.e. Await the proper opportunity.

God.

353. Godamighty neber shut him yeye.
 Godamighty = God Almighty.
354. Godamighty no lub ugly.
 God Almighty does not love bad deeds.
355. Godamighty mek man 'traight, a rum mek him can't 'tan' up.
 'Traight = straight; 'tan' = stand.
Cf. "God made man upright" (*Ecclesiastes* vii. 29).
356. Big Massa gib ebery man him own mout'-water fe swaller him own dukkanoo.
 Big Massa = God; dukkanoo = tough cake made of cornmeal. Mout'-water = saliva.
357. When poor slave look through smoke glass, a no Godamighty' fault dat Him wull look dingy.
 Wull = world.
 Misfortune is often due to one's own conduct.
358. Godamighty only mek you see 'tar, no matter which way wind blow.
 'Tar = star.

Good.

359. Good me do, tankey me get.
 Good I do, thank you I get; "Small thanks for my pains."
I.e. In a sarcastic manner.
360. Do good an' good wi' follow you.
 Wi' = will.
361. Good paster, good beef.
 Paster = pasture.
Cf. Good pastures make fat sheep.
362. You wuk good you nose mus' run.
 Wuk good = work well.
Cf. Nihil sine labore.
363. Too much "good bwoy" can't buy jackass.
Cf. Fine words butter no parsnips, of the Germans.
See No. 293.

Gourd.

364. Hollow gourd mek mos' noise.
Empty vessels. It also occurs in French, German, Dutch and Danish.
365. Better water trow way dan gourdy bruk.
Better for the water to be thrown away than for the gourd to be broken.
366. Keep you' secret in a you' own gourdy.
Cf. A silent tongue makes a wise head.

Grudge.

367. Ole grudge, fus' lick.
Fus' = first. Lick = hit.

Guinea-hen.

368. When guinea-hen cry him say, 'ooman no fe play.
I.e. Imitation of the guinea-fowl's cry.
369. Seven year no 'nough fe wash freckle off a guinea-hen back.
Freckle = speckles.
Cf. Can the leopard change his spots?

Hair.

370. Too much hair no suit lilly face.
I.e. A weak person should not assume an appearance of importance.
See No. 58.

Hand.

371. Han' da a bowl, knife da a troat.
Han' = hand; troat = throat.
A hand at the bowl, a knife at the throat.
I.e. A treacherous person, who shelters his evil designs under a guise of friendship.
372. Han' go, han' come.
Cf. Give to me and I will give to you in return.
373. Han' full, han' come.
I.e. The rich never lack friends.

Handsome.

374. Handsome face an' good luck no all one.
I.e. It is not beauty that brings good fortune.
Cf. Handsome is as handsome does.
Il dono infelice di bellezza.
375. Handsome-to-pieces.
Extraordinarily handsome.

Having.

376. Habie habie, no wante; no habie, da dead fe he.
I.e. If you have a thing you do not want it. If you do not have it you will die for it.
Cf. "What we have we prize not . . . being lacked . . . we rack the value"
(*Shakespeare*, *Much ado about Nothing*, iv. 1, 189).

He.

377. Him sa a no him a him, him say a him a no him.
I.e. He who says it is not he, it is he; but he who says it is he, it is not he.
Cf. Qui s'excuse s'accuse.

Hear.

378. **Hear me, den you.**

I.e. Let me explain, before you speak.

379. **You no yearry a you aize, you wi' yearry a you 'kin.**

Aize = ears.

If you do not hear with your ears, you will hear with your skin.

I.e. Those who persist in their evil ways and will not listen to advice will ultimately feel the effects.

Cf. He who will not hear must feel (German).

Help.

380. **Joney hab help, him hab high name.**

Herring.

381. **When herrin' mauger, him bone show.**

Mauger = meagre, or thin.

Hiding.

382. **Hidin' fe me, talkin' fe you.**

The advice of a cautious man.

Hoe.

383. **If new hoe wan' fe know how grung tough, mek him ax ole hoe.**

Grung = ground; *Mek* = make = let.

I.e. Seek advice about the unknown.

Cf. *Experientia docet.*

Hog.

384. **When hog nyam potata, him nyam 'kin an' all.**

Illustrates greediness and want of refinement.

See No. 210.

385. **Hardship mek driber carry hog-meat.**

In slavery times, the driver (a negro placed in authority over the other negroes) on getting into trouble rendered himself liable to be sent into the bush to cut fodder.

Cf. Misfortune makes strange bed-fellows.

386. **Dead hog no 'fraid fe boilin' water.**

Fraid = afraid.

I.e. When one is fallen very low, he is indifferent to any additional misfortune.

See No. 489.

387. **When hog begin fe dance rain soon wet him.**

I.e. An idle person soon gets into trouble.

388. **Wile hog say him no hab him fus' wash yet.**

Wile = wild; *fus'* = first.

I.e. An excuse for bad manners on the ground of ignorance.

389. **You mine wha' hog nyam, you neber nyam him belly.**

Wha = what; *Mine* = mind = care about.

If you regard the bad ways of some people you would never do anything for them, or get any profit from them.

390. **Wile hog say, tek some, lef' some.**

Wile = wild. *Lef'* = leave.

I.e. Provide for the rainy day.

See No. 673.

391. If you trow rocktone a hogsty, de one say "quey" a him you knock.

Trow = throw. Quey = Squeak.

I.e. A chance observation may apply.

Cf. Many a shaft at random sent,

Finds mark the archer little meant.

392. Pig ax him mumma say, wha mek him mout' long so; him say, ah, no mine me pickney, dat someting mek fe me long so, wi' mek fe you long so too.

The pig says to its mother, "What makes your mouth so long?" She says, "Ah, never mind, my child, the same thing that makes mine long will makes yours long too." The young are apt to be astonished at the deformities of age, but later on they experience them themselves.

At Acra they say, "The young wild hog asked his mother, 'Mamma, what are the warts in thy face?' She replied, 'By-and-by thou wilt have seen it already.'"

Horse.

393. Sharp 'pur mek mauger horse cut capoose.

Pur = spur; capoose = capers.

Mauger = meagre, or thin.

394. Blin' horse no want lookin' glass.

Cf. A nod is as good as a wink to a blind mare.

395. If you want fe ride furr, 'pare de harse.

Furr = far; 'pare = spare.

Cf. Festina lente.

Chi va piano va sano, chi va sano va lontano.

396. If de pass long, tek time wid de harse.

397. When horse da gallop, him behind-foot no yearry wha' him befo'-foot da say.

I.e. In important matters one neglects trifles.

See No. 197.

398. Horse wha' begin fe tek too much exercise 'pon himself, danger no furr from him.

'Pon himself = on its own accord.

Shows the folly of doing something heedlessly.

399. De longer de harse tail de easier him can brush 'way de fly.

400. De longer de harse tail de easier him can dutty him rider.

Dutty = make dirty.

401. Horse neber too good fe carry him own grass.

402. If horse use to carn when him hear grabel him wi' come.

Use = is used; carn = corn; wi' = will.

I.e. The gravel shaken in a box, to imitate the rattling of corn, will bring him to you.

403. A de willin' harse, dem saddle mos'.

Mos' = most.

Cf. The willing horse is driven to death.

See No. 53.

Houses.

404. Keep clear a ole house, les' dem fall down 'pon you.

How-do-you-do.

405. Howdye and tanky, bruk no square.

Tanky = Thank you.

Hurry.

406. "Too-much-hurry" get dey to-morra, "tek-time" get dey to-day.
Cf. Much haste, worse speed.

I.

407. "Me-know-it" neber go before.
 Me-know-it = I know it.
I.e. It is easy to be wise after the event.
Cf. "I told you so."

Impossibilities.

408. Ha, me bwoy! I lib fe see san'-fly tek crowbar so pull jigger out a
 mosquita foot.
Jigger, or chigoe = a small insect that burrows under the flesh.
 An exclamation of one who sees what he previously thought was impossible.
409. Me 'member de day when dem shingle house wid sal' fish, an'
 mosquita put on red coat so go out fe militia man.
 A retort on one who tells wonderful travellers' tales about what took place
 in the old days.
410. Fetch one basket a san' fe mek one rope.
 San' = sand.
Cf. Ex arena funiculum nectis.
411. When puss lay egg.
412. You can't tie one yam.

Irritable.

413. You see me 'tan' same like was-was bite me pon tree, but me no
 bad s'mody.
 Was-was = wasp; s'mody = somebody = pers on.
I.e. Describes an irritable, but harmless person.

Jamaica.

414. Jamaica longer dan rope.
 Things cannot continue for ever.
Cf. It's a far cry to Loch Awe.
See No. 687.

Jig.

415. Wha' you lose in de jig, you gain in de reel.

Jiggers.

416. Jigger no care fe bockra foot.
 No care fe bockra foot = does not respect the feet of white persons.
417. You sarcy like jigger.
 Sarcy = saucy.
 Said of the impudent person.

John Crow.

418. Ebery John Crow tink him pickney white.
 John Crow = a vulture with black plumage. Young John Crows are white
 when hatched, but do not remain white.
I.e. What is one's own is always the best.
Cf. All his geese are swans.
 Every crow thinks her ain bird whitest.

419. If you cuss John Crow peel-head, turkey wi' bex.

(Sometimes guinea-hen is substituted for turkey.)

Peel-head = bald; wi' bex = will be vexed.

I.e. Both have bald heads. The cap meant for the John Crow fits the turkey.

420. Cuss cuss neber kill John Crow.

Cf. Hard words break no bones.

See Nos. 142 and 735.

421. You no care more 'bout it dan John Crow care fe Sunday marnin'.

Implies indifference.

422. John Crow say him da go mek house when rain set.

The John Crow says he will make a house when the rain begins. Some people never make provision for a rainy day. Applied to those who are lacking in foresight.

423. John Crow ben wan' go a leeward befo' wha' you tink when hurricane blow ?

The John Crow has been wanting to go to leeward before the hurricane only gave him an excuse. When people wish to do a thing they do not lack motives.

The West Africa (Yoruba) version is "The crow was going to Ibara ; a breeze sprung up behind ; 'That will help me on famously,' quoth the crow."

See No. 728.

424. You can't keep crow from flyin', but you can keep him from pitchin' 'pon you head.

425. John Crow say him a dandy-man when him hab so-so fedder.

So-so = only ; fedder = feathers. Applied to a vain person.

See No. 556.

426. John Crow say him a dandy man, but him put on bald head fe mek fas' s'mody fine fault wid him.

Fas' s'mody = a fast somebody = an impertinent person.

Cf. The story of the witness's answer to the question "What made you measure that distance so minutely?" "Because I felt sure some fool would ask me!"

427. If you can't get turkey you must sati'fy wid John Crow.

I.e. If you cannot get what you want you must be satisfied with that which comes nearest to it in appearance ; the John Crow is like a small turkey in appearance.

Cf. "He is doubly blest who of the worst can make the best" (*Combe*, "Dr. Syntax").

428. Wha' you see carrin, crow da dey.

Where you see carrion you will find the John Crow.

Cf. Where the carcass is there are the vultures gathered together.

429. When John Crow see mauger horse, him roas' plantain fe him.

I.e. He roasts plantain to eat with the horse which he thinks will soon die.

Applied to the advantage of being prepared for what may come.

Kick.

430. Fe get one quattie better dan kick.

Quattie = $1\frac{1}{2}d$.

Cf. Half a loaf is better than no bread.

Kill.

431. If you kill me, bury me too.

Do the whole of a favour.

Know.

432. Man no know, him no know fe true.

Indicates uncertainty.

Lady.

433. When fine lady lib well, him tek pin fe nyam peas.

See No. 295.

Land-Turtle.

434. When morass ketch fire, land-turtle look fe mangrove tree.

Cf. Any port in a storm.

Laugh.

435. Man laugh too much him get "wha's matter?"

436. No tek ugly mek laugh.

Don't make fun of what is disgraceful or cannot be helped.

Lawyer.

437. Good lawyer, bad neighbour.

Cf. Bon avocat, mauvais voisin.

438. Lawyer look 'pon neger wid one yeye, but him look 'pon him pocket wid two.

Leaves.

439. If you no wan' leaf drop 'pon you, 'tan' from under de tree.

Avoid a thing if you don't like the consequences.

Cf. "He that toucheth pitch," etc. (Ecclesiastes xiii. 1).

440. Leaf fall in a dutty riber, but it no say i' da rot.

Dutty = dirty; say i' da rot = that it is rotting.

I.e. Does not realize the consequences, or that it is adding to the impurity of the river.

Lie.

441. Lie wus dan sore.

Wus = worse.

442. Lie go 'pon foot, scandal hab wing.

443. In ebery lie dere is an ounce o' trut'.

Trut = truth.

Cf. No smoke without fire.

Nulla falsa doctrina est quæ non permisceat aliquid veritatis.

Little.

444. Lilly at a time sarb long.

Sarb long = serves for a long time.

Cf. Slow and steady wins the race.

Love me little, love me long.

445. If you hab lilly, put lilly in a de pot; if you hab plenty, put plenty.

Cf. Cut your coat according to your cloth.

Live.

446. Lib-well can't lef' berry-well alone.

I.e. The well-to-do are never satisfied.

Cf. Le Mieux est l'ennemi du bien.

447. **Wha' fire an' water dey, anybody can lib.**

Where there are fire and water any one can make a living.
See No. 279.

Lizard.

448. **Lizard neber plant corn, but him hab plenty.**

I.e. Trust in Providence.
Cf. S. Matthew vi. 26.

449. **When you see lizard lick him mout', him tas' something sweet.**

450. **Because lizard no good fe eat, him no 'fraid fe walk a road.**

Cf. Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator (*Juvenal*, Satires, XI. 22).

451. **If snake bite you, you see lizard you run.**

The West African (Oji) version is, "He whom a serpent has bitten, dreads a slowworm." In Hebrew it is, "He that hath been bitten by a serpent dreads a rope."

Cf. Chat echaudé craint l'eau froide.

Long.

452. **Dere is long pass between "say" and "do."**

Cf. Mas vale un "toma" quedos "pedare."
One "take it" is better than two "I will give it you."

Look.

453. **De more you look, de less you see.**

Luck.

454. **Neber pass you fus' luck.**

You fus' = your first.

Cf. "There is a tide in the affairs of men," etc. (*Shakespeare*, *Julius Caesar*, iv. 3).

See No. 647.

Machete.

455. **'Paniar' machete cut two side.**

A Spanish machete (knife) is double-edged.

Deceitful people tell one tale to one person, another to another.

Maggots.

456. **Maggot use fe lib befo' darg get sore yeye.**

Use fe lib = used to live; yeye = eye.

One can go on doing as one has done hitherto.

Magistrate.

457. **When man magistrate, crooked da follow him.**

When a man is a magistrate, deceit follows him.

Mammie.

458. **You no see mammie, you seek granny.**

If you do not see the mother you seek the grandmother.

I.e. Go a step further back in your search.

Man.

459. **When man hab raw meat him look fe fire.**

When you have the material, then you look for the means.

The African version is, "He draws near the fire whose meat is raw."

460. **If man ben know, him would a neber dig coco hole dis time a de year.**

Cf. Experientia docet.

461. If man ben know, him would a neber plant yam in a 'trange
'ooman grung.
Grung = ground.
If a man is wise he will not labour where he is uncertain of reaping
his reward.
462. When man dead, grass grow a him door.
463. Mean man go a market two time.
See No. 475.
464. Man can't whistle an' smoke same time.
465. Cedar board laugh after dead man.
Laugh after = laughs at.
Because it is used for coffins.
466. When man say him no mine, den him mine.
No mine = does not mind.
Cf. "Methinks he doth protest too much."
467. When man no done climb hill him should a neber trow 'way him
'tick ; or, If you no done cross riber, no trow away you 'tick.
Trow way = throw away ; 'tick = stick.
Don't relinquish a friendship before you are independent.
See Nos. 2 and 615.
468. Man talk too much, him pay him daddy debt.
Daddy debt = father's debt.
Talk too much and you will undertake troubles that do not belong
to you.
469. You shake man' han', you no shake him heart.
470. De man dat hab on boot must go befo' so 'mash macca.
'Mash = break down ; macca = thorny bushes.
471. Long man 'mash macca mek short man pass.
The strongest and best man should lead.
Cf. Let the best horse leap the hedge first.
472. De man fool who mek him darg bruk in a him kitchen two time.
The man is a fool who allows his dog to break into his kitchen twice.
Cf. "Wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?" (*Shakespeare*,
Merchant of Venice, iv. 1).
473. If man can't dance, him say de fiddle no good.
Cf. A bad workman finds fault with his tools. The West African (Oji)
version is, "If you cannot dance you will say 'the drum is not
agreeable.'"
See No. 151.
474. Man wid half a foot always dance near him fambly.
I.e. So as not to be criticized too severely. A caution to a weak or poor
person not to be too independent or obtrusive.
See No. 150.
475. Trouble mek man cut yam head two time.
He has to economize in planting.
See Nos. 463 and 724.
476. Man cubbitch like a 'tar apple.
Cubbitch = covetous, niggardly ; 'tar apple = star apple. However ripe it
never drops off the tree.
In Hausaland they say, "O chiwu, you are hard at the fork ; you
ripen, but you do not fall." Chiwu is a shrub very tough
where the branches join.

477. Boastin' man is liar' brudder.

Liar' brudder = brother to a liar.

A vaunter and a liar are the same thing.

478. One man beat de bush and de oder ketch de bud.

Bud = bird.

It is not always the one who does the work that gets the profit.

This occurs in English and French.

Cf. "Sic vos non vobis" (*Virgil*).

479. Man dat clim' too high mus' fall down.

Cf. A cader va chi troppo in alto sale. It also occurs in English and French.

480. De wises' man is sometime' fool.

Cf. "Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit" (*Pliny*).

481. White man' yeye bun neger.

Bun = burns = over-awes.

482. De man all honey, fly wi' nyam him.

I.e. The over-generous are soon ruined.

483. Hard libin' mek man bwoil callalu.

Callalu is a poor food by itself, but welcome to a poor man.

See No. 512.

484. Patient man ride jackass.

I.e. A patient man will put up with a great deal, or will more slowly attain his end.

485. Man sleep in a fowl nes', but fowl nes' no him bed.

I.e. Expresses the hope of a poor man that his circumstances will improve.

486. Wha' man no know, is good fe know.

Wha' = where = a place that.

Expresses the benefit to be derived from being first in the field.

Cf. Knowledge is power.

487. Man eber so hearty, dead da watch him.

Though a man may be ever so hearty, death is watching him.

488. A man nyam well, but duppy out a de corner a him yeye da watch him.

Duppy = ghost.

A warning that death must come even to those well off.

See No. 507.

489. When man dead him no 'fraid if him rotten.

No 'fraid if him rotten = is not afraid of becoming rotten; nothing further can happen to him.

See No. 386.

490. Man no done sleep, him no done dream.

A man who has not done sleeping has not done dreaming.

See No. 640.

491. Man pay dear fe larn sometime'.

I.e. Experience is sometimes expensive.

492. When man no done grow, him neber should cuss long man.

No done grow = has not finished growing.

The West African version is, "If you are a child do not deride a short man." You do not know but what you may be short too.

See No. 274.

493. When man dead him done.

494. Plenty bone a dunghill come from good man table.
Refers to those who have come down in the world.
495. Ebery man hones' till de day dem ketch him.
Hones' = honest.
496. Same day man get good soup him can't get good foo-foo.
Foo-foo = mashed plantains, dumplings, or other substances put into soup.
This being in the soup would be dissolved, and the two cannot be got at one time.
Cf. You can't eat your cake and have it too.
497. No man too ole fe ole maid.
498. Man dey carry 'traw musn't fool wid fire.
Cf. Those that live in glass houses should not throw stones.
See 716.
499. De man who tie mad darg is de right s'mody fe loose him.
S'mody = somebody = person.
I.e. A man who makes trouble must see it through.
500. When man dey pon him back, you can bruk him head wid 'pwoil milk.
'Pwoil = spoilt = curdled.
I.e. A little thing will completely ruin one who is down on his luck.
501. Neger wha fin' dead man mus' be de man who kill him.
Neger = negro.
He pretends to find the corpse to avoid suspicion.
Cf. Qui s'excuse s'accuse.
502. Him a cleber man wha can dribe way hungry wid workin' him jaw.
Hungry = hunger.
Cf. "Cloy the hungry edge of appetite by bare imagination of a feast"
(*Shakespeare*, *Richard II.*, i. 3).
503. "Yes, yes" neber carry man ober mountain.
504. When man drunk, him walk an 'tagger, when 'ooman drunk him si'
down and consider.
'Tagger = stagger; si' = sits.
505. When man hab plenty him bwoil pot.
See No. 579.
506. Man po' him wud po'.
Po' = poor. Wud = word.
If a man has nothing his word is worthless.
Cf. The reasons of the poor weigh not (quoted by George Herbert).
507. Man dey nyam good, ugly dey watch him.
508. When man hab trouble, 'ooman tek it mek laugh.

Management.

509. Manage good better dan big wages.
Manage good = good management.
Cf. "Magnum vectigal parsimonia" (*Cicero and Lucretius*, R.N. 5. 1117).

Marriage.

510. Marriage hab teet' an' bite hot.
Teet' = teeth.

Mat.

511. You is de mat, me is de grung.
Grung = ground. An assertion of humility.

D

Meat.

512. You po' fe meat, you nyam junjo.

If you are too poor to buy meat, you must eat fungus.

I.e. Want makes you put up with what you would not otherwise relish.

See No. 488.

Mischief.

513. When mischief-maker meet, de debil go to dinner.

Misfortune.

514. Misfortune neber trow cloud.

I.e. Gives no warning.

See No. 696.

Money.

515. Hab money, hab fren'.

Cf. Greek of Theognis.

It also occurs in Latin, Italian and French.

516. When money done, lub done.

Cf. When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out at the window.

Monkey.

517. No bill bush fe monkey fe run race.

No bill bush = do not clear the underwood.

I.e. Do not waste your time on unnecessary work.

518. Follow-fashion bruk monkey neck.

Follow fashion = imitation of others.

519. Monkey' follow-fashion cut him troat.

520. Follow-fashion mek monkey lose him tail.

Nos. 518-520 all have the same application, referring to the ills that befall those who ape their betters.

521. Quattie bread-gut fill monkey belly.

A penny-halfpenny-worth of crumbs fills a monkey's belly.

Bread-gut = crumby part of bread.

522. Hungry mek monkey blow fire.

Necessity teaches him new habits.

Cf. "Necessity is the mother of invention."

523. De higher monkey clime de plainer him tail show.

This occurs in Italian, French and German.

524. Play wid monkey, but no play wid him tail.

If you are friendly with any one, do not take too many liberties with him.

525. If you back monkey, him wi' fight tiger.

The Yoruba version is, "If a dog has a man to back him he will kill a baboon."

526. Monkey neber so drunk fe go sleep front a darg kennel.

See No. 104.

527. Monkey gie him pickney name an' say, stan', b'ambye we will all see.

B'ambye = by-and-by. He gives him a name, hoping that some day he may become a man. It indicates the wisdom of providing for possible though unlikely contingencies.

See No. 531.

528. No trus' monkey.

Do not trust a monkey.

Cf. "Bourd not with Bawty."*See* No. 180.**529. Monkey play de fiddle mek baboon dance.***I.e.* Relations should oblige each other.**530. You gi' monkey fe black darg, a change fe change.**

It is exchange without profit.

I.e. For exchange's sake.**531. Monkey' darg name "'tan' an' see."**

Monkey's dog is named "stand and see." His motto is patience.

See No. 527.**532. Sof'ly, sof'ly ketch monkey.**

Sof'ly = cautiously.

Cf. *Festina lente.***533. Monkey say wha' in a him mout' no fe him, but wha' in a him belly a fe him.**

No fe him = is not his; he is not sure of it.

534. Monkey pickney neber walk 'pon grung.

Grung = ground.

Mosquito.**535. Masquita often go a village fe syrup, but him no always get wha' him go for.****Mouse.****536. When mus-mus see fire, him say cool breeze a blow.**

Mus—mus = mouse.

I.e. Some people do not readily realize danger.**Mouth.****537. Mout' hab nuttin fe do, him say annancy grow, same time annancy 'tan' from him barn.**

Mout' hab nuttin fe do = the idle talker; barn = born.

Annancy = a mythical spider of African folklore.

538. Mout' a fe dem, mek dem talk.

An answer to an impotent threat—let them talk.

539. Shut mout' no ketch fly.*I.e.* Mind your own business and so avoid trouble. This occurs in English, French, Italian and Spanish.**540. Mout' wha' say no wi' say yes.**

The mouth that says no will also say yes.

Cf. "Out of the same mouth blessing and cursing" (*S. James' Epistles* iii. 10).**541. Mout' say no, but yeye say yes.****542. Pat somet'ing wha sweet mout', sick belly.****Much.****543. Too much a' one time, good fe nuttin'.**

This occurs in Greek, French, Italian, German and Dutch.

Mud-fish.**544. Neber mek mud-fish tail touch water.**

Do not let a mud-fish's tail touch the water (or it will escape).

Mule.

545. When fly bodder mauger mule nobody see, but when him kick dem say him bad.

I.e. A poor person is blamed when he at last resents long-continued pin-pricks.

Needle.

546. Hot needle bun tread.

Bun = burns; tread = thread.

Cf. Haste makes waste.

547. Needle may mek clothes, but him naked himself.

Cf. "The whetstone which sharpens but cannot cut" (*Horace, Arts Poet.*, 304).

Night.

548. Dark night hab no gubnor.

A dark night has no governor. Used in the same sense as "Bush hab yeye," "When yeye no see mout' no take."

See No. 642.

Nightingale.

549. If nightingale sing too much, him kill him mumma.

I.e. Through jealousy; mumma = mamma.

550. A no want o' fat mek nightingale foot 'tan 'so.

It is not for the want of fat that the nightingale's legs stand so.

See Nos. 50 and 553.

Nobody.

551. Nobody need fe beg when rain come.

Ochra.

552. Furr pass mek ochra 'pwoil.

A long distance makes the ochra spoil.

I.e. Things of little worth are not worth carrying a long distance. The fruit of the ochra (*Hibiscus esculentus*) is used as a vegetable, and also to thicken soup.

Owl.

553. No because 'creech owl hab no yeye mek him no fly a day.

It is not because a screech owl has no eyes that he does not fly in the day.

I.e. If you can only find it out there is a reason for everything.

See No. 50.

Owner.

554. Good owner musn' hab 'tingy oberseer.

Cf. Like master like man.

Parrot.

555. Because parrot mek noise, dem say a him one nyam banana.

I.e. Because he is a noisy bird he gets the credit of eating all the fruit.

556. Pretty poll say him a dandy man, same time him hab so-so fedder.

See No. 425.

Parson.

557. Parson christen him own pickney fus'.

Fus' = first.

See No. 239.

Passion.

558. De bes' passion is compassion.

Pasture.

559. Bad paster mek sheep shabby.
The converse of No. 861.

Patience.

560. Patience mek sick man drink water gruel.

Pattoo.

561. Ole grudge mek pattoo lay egg.
Pattoo (or pottoo) = an owl.

Pay.

562. Pay to-day, trus' to-morrow.
Trus' = trust = credit.
This occurs in the Latin of *Varro*.

Peacock.

563. Peacock hide him foot when him hear 'bout him tail.
I.e. A proud and ostentatious person does not like his little weaknesses exposed.

Pickney.

564. Cry-cry pickney neber hab right.
Those who are always complaining are seldom listened to.
565. When pickney bad him no wut trash'.
No wut trash = absolutely worthless; wut = worth.
566. Me lub pickney, but me no eat wid dem.
Because familiarity breeds contempt.
567. Go a pickney mumma yard an' you sure fe get somet'ing.
Where there are children there is usually food.
568. Hard aise pickney neber go good.
Hard aise = hard ears = obstinate.
569. Pickney nyam mumma, but mumma no nyam pickney.
Parents are kinder to children, than children to parents.

Plantain.

570. If plantain ben know say him neck gwine bruk him neber would a shoot.
Shoot = *i.e.* bear fruit.
571. If you wan' fe eat roas' plantain you mus' satisfy fe bun you finger.
Bun = burn.
Cf. You cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs.
572. Mauger plantain better dan none at all.
The Hausa proverb runs, "However bad a slave is he is better than 'empty house.'"
Cf. Half a loaf is better than no bread.
573. 'Ceitful fire roas' plantain, 'cong-a-so' 'crape it.
cong-a-so = currying favour; 'crape = scrapes.
What is begun with deceit will be completed with insincerity.

574. One chop neber done plantain walk.
 Neber done = will not completely chop out.

Plate.

575. Tun me down saf'ly, me a crack plate.
 Crack plate = *i.e.* a delicate person.
 576. Tek me up you tek up trouble, put me down you put down bruk plate.
I.e. Leave me alone or you will get into trouble.
 577. Put down sof'ly, neber bruk plate.

Plenty.

578. When you hab plenty 'member rainy day.
 579. When you hab plenty begin bwoil pot full.
 Bwoil pot full = *i.e.* make large provision for the future.
See No. 505.

Poor.

580. Poor neber sorry fe himself.
I.e. The poor do not act so as to secure sympathy.
 581. Poor man neber bex.
 Neber bex = is never vexed.
 The poor are patient in suffering, and have to put up with insults.

Pot.

582. When pot full, pot cober nyam some.
I.e. In a rich man's house, servants are well off.
 583. You neber see empty pot bwoil over.
I.e. Poor people have nothing to give away.
 584. Pot say to kettle, 'tan 'way, you smudge me.
Cf. The pot calls the kettle black.
 585. Quart pot tun down, gill pot tun up.
 Tun = turns.
 The more important makes the less show.
 586. Affoo yam neber 'mash neger pot-bottom.
 'Mash = smash.
 The Affoo yam is a very hard kind.

Prayer.

587. Pr'yer in de mout' only, is no pr'yer.

Promises.

588. Big promise mek fool merry.
Cf. Fair words make fools fain. Also occurs in French, Danish, Italian and Portuguese.

Pump.

589. No pump if de sucker is dry.
I.e. No use to beg from a poor person—useless labour.
See Nos. 16 & 215.

Pumpkin.

590. If you trabel you wi' know wha' water walk go a punkin belly.

Trabel = travel; punkin = pumpkin.

The experience of travel will make you understand even how water gets into a pumpkin.

Cf. The milk in the coco-nut.

See No. 685.

591. Packy neber bear punkin.

See No. 91.

Puppy.

See Dog.

Puss.*

592. If man no walk a night time no know say puss hab cockeye.

See No. 133.

593. Puss no hab han', but him tek him foot fe wipe him face.

Han' = hand.

I.e. Adapt yourself to your circumstances.

594. When puss hab money him buy cheese.

See No. 224.

595. You eber see puss refuse butter?

596. Trouble mek puss run up prickly pear.

Prickly pear is a cactus.

Cf. Any port in a storm.

597. Puss may look 'pon king, but him rader rat.

Look 'pon = look at; rader = rather.

This occurs in English (*Heywood*, 1546).

598. When puss gone, ratta tek house.

Ratta = rats.

Cf. When the cat's away the mice will play.

599. Puss no tief, him shame. You no see him shut him yeye.

A cat would be ashamed not to steal.

600. Only fool put puss fe watch milk.

At Accra they say "No one gives a pig to a hyena to keep."

See Nos. 242 and 350.

601. Neber buy puss in a bag.

Cf. Pig in a poke.

602. When puss belly full, ratta bitter.

I.e. The rats no longer taste nice.

See No. 18.

603. Puss eat ratta till him say ratta tail 'tink.

'Tink (here) = stinks.

A cat when eating a rat leaves the tail.

Quarrel.

604. Befo' pra-pra mek quarrel, mek ground 'cripple.

Pra-pra = appropriation of goods.

S'ripple = slippery.

605. 'Top quarrel befo' fight come.

* Negroes seldom talk of a cat. They generally say puss.

Rain.**606. Rain neber fall a' one man' door.**

When it rains it rains on all (Hindu). "The rain falleth on the just and the unjust" (*S. Matthew v. 45*).

Rats.**607. When rat bite bottle de calabash mus' run.**

I.e. When the strong suffer, the weak must fail.

608. Too much rat can't dig good hole.

Cf. Too many cooks spoil the broth.

609. When puss dead, ratta tek him 'kin mek baig.

Baig = bag.

I.e. When you are dead your former victims get the advantage of you.

610. One token is 'nough fe rat.

Cf. Once bit twice shy.

611. Rat neber mek noise in a puss aise.

Aise = ears.

612. Ratta cunny, so when puss gone him mek merry.

Cunny = cunning.

Cf. When the cat's away, the mice will play.

613. Ratta say if man chop after him, dat no kill him, but if him say, "looko' rat" dat is wuss.

The man who strikes openly at one does not do so much harm as he who gives one a bad name.

River.**614. Sof'ly ribber run deep.**

Cf. Still waters run deep.

615. If you no done cross ribber no trow way you 'tick.**616. Braggin' ribber neber drown s'mody.**

Braggin = noisy; s'mody = somebody = anybody.

Cf. Much cry, little wool.

Still waters run deep.

Says Till to Tweed—

"Tho' ye rin wi' speed and I rin slaw,
For ilka man that you droon I droon twa."

617. When ribber come down, 'tone mout' full.**Rope.****618. De rope you da pull a no de rope me da haul.**

See No. 151.

619. Annancy' rope tie him massa.

Annancy = a mythical spider of African origin.

Cf. Hoist with his own petard.

Sailor.**620. Sailor draw rope an' say, "keep wha' you got."**

Save all you can and do not spend unnecessarily what you have saved.

Salt.**621. Salt neber say himself sweet.**

Cf. Self-praise is no recommendation.

Service.

622. When sarbice ober chuch doo' shet.
When the service is over the church door is shut.

Shame.

623. You tek shame, you shake cocobay-man' han'.
Cocobay = leprosy, of which there is great horror in the West Indies.
I.e. If you are too deferential to some people you may be led to do what you do not approve of.
624. Don't tek shame and mek you fren' pickney 'pwoil you beaver.
Beaver = beaver hat; tek shame = be too deferential.

Sheep.

625. Sheep an' goat no all one.
626. Sheep hab de wuss a food, yet him satisfy.
De wuss a food = the worst food.
627. When sheep mek dance goat no hab bisness da.
See No. 68.

Shilling.

628. If you hab shillin', wash de shillin', drink de water an keep de shillin'.
Advice to practise the strictest economy.

Ship.

629. "No-mine" mek ship run ashore.
No mine = don't mind or don't care.
Carelessness makes the ship run ashore.
Cf. "Don't care" came to be hanged.

Shoes.

630. Only shoe know if 'tockin' hab hole.
Cf. The wearer alone knows where the shoe pinches.
631. Cry shoe no good fe lis'ner.
I.e. Shoes that cry or squeak will betray a person who comes to listen.
Negroes are very fond of squeaking shoes and make shoemakers insert "squeakers" in the soles when making them.

Sickness.

632. Sickness ride horse come, him tek foot go 'way.
Sickness rides a horse coming, but walks away.
Cf. Le mal vient à cheval et s'en va à pied.
633. Long sickness bring deat', deat' bring alteration.
Deat' = death.
634. Sick man no kyar, wha' doctor kyar?
Kyar = care.
I.e. If the patient doesn't care, why should the doctor care?

Singers.

635. Dem short fe singer when dem put peacock in a choir.

Sitting Down.

636. Too much si'-down bruk breeches.
Sitting down too much wears out one's trousers.

637. Si'-down neber tell him massa get up.

Skin.

638. 'Kin fit closer dan shut.

'Kin = skin ; shut = shirt.

Cf. Close sits my shirt, but closer my skin. It also occurs in Latin.

Sleep.

639. Sleep hab no massa.

Sooner or later you must sleep.

See No. 548.

640. Sleep no done dream no done.

See No. 490.

Snake.

641. When yaller snake dead you can measure him.

You cannot measure a live snake. You can only appreciate a danger when it is past.

642. Snake dat wan' fe grow up always stay in him hole.

See No. 125.

Softly.

643. 'Tan' sof'ly better dan beg pardon.

I.e. Better not give offence than have to apologize.

Somebody.

644. If you wan' s'mody fe lub you, you mus' lub dem fus'.

Cf. Amor gignit amorem.

S. John i. 4, 19.

645. If s'mody always drinkin' dem always dry.

Cf. The more you drink the more you may.

Something.

646. Better see someting before someting see you.

Cf. Forewarned is forearmed.

647. If someting 'top too long it sarb 'noder man.

'Top = stops ; sarb = serves.

Applied to lost opportunities.

See No. 454.

648. Someting 'pwoil a marnin can neber tun good by night.

I.e. What has been spoilt to begin with is not going to be made right in the end.

649. Sweet soup mek man drink ants.

I.e. A pleasurable act sometimes leads to degradation.

650. If you drink soup you lub 'poon.

'Poon = spoon.

651. You can't eat ochra soup wid one finger.

Ochra soap is particularly thin and slippery.

Speech.

652. If 'peech wut a shillin', silence wut a poun'.

Wut = is worth.

Cf. Speech is silver, silence is gold.

Spider.

653. Spider an' fly can't mek bargain.

Cf. Leonina societas. A law phrase based on a fable of Phædrus.

Spit.

654. If you 'pit in de sky it wi' fall in you' face.

'Pit = spit.

Squeeze.

655. Easy 'queeze mek no riot.

It is advisable not to make a fuss about things.

Cf. A sly squeeze attracts no attention.

Stand.

656. If you won' 'tan' blow, no play 'tick.

If you can't take a blow in good part, don't provoke in play.

Starch.

657. You put starch a door, you no watch fe rain ?

Starch when made is wet, and put to dry at the door; therefore you must watch for the rain.

I.e. You must be cautious and watch against impending danger when you have interests at stake.

Stone.

658. Rocktone a riber bottom no feel sun hot.

A stone at the bottom of the river does not feel the heat of the sun.

Those in easy circumstances do not realize the hardships of others.

659. Rocktone a riber no know wha' rocktone a roadside a feel.

Story.

660. You wan' hear how 'tory go wait till quarrel come.

If you want to know the truth of a story wait until a quarrel comes.

661. 'Tory da fe talk, but long bench no da fe si' down 'pon.

I.e. I have much to say, but no convenient opportunity.

662. Long 'tory mek dem ketch run-way neger.

Neger = negro.

Delays should be avoided.

Stranger.

663. 'Tranger hab no right fe carry coffin if him no know wha' de buryin' grung da.

I.e. Don't interfere if you are an outsider and don't know all the circumstances.

664. 'Tranger neber walk in a de back door.

See No. 667.

665. Neber pull out you' inside fe gi' 'tranger and den tek trash fe 'tuff yourself.

I.e. Do not be too generous to your own disadvantage.

Cf. Charity begins at home.

666. 'Tranger no know wha' de deep water da in de pass.

A caution against undertaking to do something you don't fully understand.

667. 'Tranger no know back door.

See No. 664.

Sugar.

668. Wha' you see sugar a dey you see fly.

669. Sugar barrel neber 'mash ants.

Mash = smashes = breaks.

I.e. One cannot get too much of a good thing.

Sun.

670. Sun set but danger neber set.

671. Sun cool, you call him afternoon.

When a bad-tempered person is pleasant you fancy you can do as you like with him.

Sweet.

672. Sweet tongue hide bad heart.

Describes a plausible but dangerous person.

Talk.

673. Talk some, lef' some.

Lef' = leave.

Don't be too communicative.

See No. 390.

674. No ebery ting you yearry good fe talk.

Yearry = hear.

Be discreet in your conversation.

675. Talk is de aise food.

Aise = ears.

Thank You.

676. "Tank you" no buy half bit.

Cf. Deeds not words; words have no value.

See No. 405.

Thief.

677. One tief no like see 'noder tief carry long bag.

One thief never likes to see another with booty.

The African version is, "One monkey does not like another to get a belly full."

Cf. Ane beggar is wae that anither by the gate gae. It also occurs in German and the Greek of *Hesiod*.

678. If you wan' fe ketch a tief fine him track.

Fine = find.

679. When black man tief him tief half a bit, when bockra tief him tief whole estate.

Bit = a small piece of money. Bockra (or buckra) = a white man.

Cf. Little thieves we hang, great ones we salute (German).

Michael Drayton has the same.

680. Ebery day debil help tief, one day God help watchman.

I.e. Sooner or later a crime is discovered.

Tiger.

681. If you call tiger massa, him wi' nyam you.

I.e. It does not pay to be too humble.

682. Tiger sleep but him tail shake.

I.e. Not all sleep who have closed eyes.

683. Tiger no fraid fe bull dog.

684. When tiger get ole, darg bark after him.

Applied to the humiliation that attends old age.

Time.

685. You tek time you fine how water get in a melon belly.

See No. 590.

686. You tek time you fine ant' gut.

If you search patiently you will find out what you seek.

See No. 8.

687. Time longer dan rope.

See No. 414.

688. "One time" is neber done.

One time = some day.

Applied to one who is ever procrastinating.

Cf. "One of these days" is none of these days.

To-day.

689. To-day fe me, tomorra fe you.

My misfortune to-day may be yours to-morrow.

This is from the Latin.

Towel.

690. Towel tun table cloth.

Tun = turned.

Applied to an overdressed person or to one who has risen in the world.

Tree.

691. Tree look eber so soun' woodpecker know wha' fe do wid him.

I.e. However great a man is he has his weak points.

See No. 55.

692. When breeze no blow tree no shake.

Adversity finds out the weak points.

Cf. No smoke without fire.

Trouble.

693. Trouble ketch man, pickney frock fit him.

694. If trouble ketch darg monkey breeches fit him.

695. Trouble da a bush, annancy bring i' come a house.

When trouble was in the bush (uncultivated land) Annancy (a mythical spider) brought it into the house.

I.e. Some people bring trouble upon themselves by their imprudence.

696. Trouble neber set like rain.

In Jamaica rain is usually seen long before it comes. Trouble hardly ever gives warning.

See No. 514.

697. Trouble neber blow shell when him da came.

Gives no warning; cartmen and stock drivers sound a shell to give warning on the road.

698. Trouble neber flatter when him come.

Trouble is always grievous.

699. Trouble mek ol' 'ooman trot.

The Welsh say "Necessity will make an old woman trot." Also occurs in Scotch, French, Italian, Dutch, Danish and Spanish.

700. Neber trouble trouble till trouble trouble you.

Cf. Don't meet trouble halfway.

701. Beautiful 'ooman, beautiful trouble.

See No. 719.

Trust.

702. Neber trus' wha' sleep a cole.

A cole = in the cold.

Don't trust animals which are wild creatures.

See No. 44.

Walk.

703. Fe walk fe nuttin better dan fe si' down fe nuttin.

I.e. It is better to look for a thing than wait till it comes to you.

Walls.

704. 'Tone wall' hab yeye.

'tone = stone.

It occurs in English, German, Portuguese, Dutch and the French of *Rabelais*.

See No. 77.

Wash.

705. You wash me no wash me back.

Do not think one privilege gives you a free hand.

Wasp.

706. Was' was' buil' comb, but him can't put fat in a it.

Was' was' = wasps; buil' comb = build comb; fat = honey.

Applied to a workman unable to complete a job.

Water.

707. Water more dan flour.

The work is not divided in proper proportion.

708. Neber trow 'way dutty water befo' you hab clean.

Of Irish origin. The Scotch say "Cast not out the old water while [till] the new come in."

See No. 86.

709. Dutty water wi' put out fire.

Cf. Foul water will quench fire.

710. Beg-beg water can't bwoil cow 'kin

Beg-beg = borrowed.

I.e. You can only borrow a small quantity of water, and it takes much to boil a tough cowskin. Applied to means inadequate to the end.

711. Borra water neber bwoil pot.

Borrowed water will not make the pot boil.

Cf. He that goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing.

712. Lilly water kill big fire.

Lilly = little.

713. Too much water mek gungo peas tun shot.

Water-melon.

714. Water-melon neber bear punkin.

Punkin = pumpkin.

Applied to an impossibility.

See No. 83.

Wife.

715. Good wife better dan estate waggon.

Window.

716. If you hab sash window neber trow 'tone.

Sash windows = windows with glass in them.

Cf. Those that live in glass houses should not throw stones.

See No. 498.

Wise.

717. Wise captain carry more ballas' dan sail.

Woman.

718. If you wan' fe know if ole 'ooman tongue long you must pull him jigger hot.

Jigger = a small flea that burrows under the flesh; hot = so as to hurt her.

719. Handsome 'ooman, handsome rogue.

A woman's beauty is not an index of her virtue.

See No. 701.

720. Handsome face 'ooman not de bestest kind of 'ooman.

721. Woman 'ceitful like 'tar-apple leaf.

The two sides of the star-apple leaf differ in colour.

722. Rub ole 'ooman back, him mek you tas'e him pepper pot.

mek = make = let; pepper pot = a thick, rich soup.

E.g. If you want to get anything out of some people you must first do them a service.

723. If you follow old 'ooman you will nyam pot bottom.

724. Distress mek 'ooman ketch darg flea two time.

E.g. Distress and nervousness are the cause of work being done badly.

Cf. More haste less speed.

See Nos. 463 and 475.

725. 'Ooman rain neber done.

Rain is here used for tears. A woman often cries for what she wants; or, a weak, light rain is generally a long one.

See Note to No. 36.

726. 'Ooman no wan' fe dance him say him frock short.

A woman who does not want to dance says her frock is short.

I.e. She makes excuses.

727. Go a cross pass, you see ole 'ooman no trouble him.

Because at cross-roads there are almost sure to be witnesses.

728. Ole 'ooman ben want fe cry befo' wha' you tink when him get sore yeye.

I.e. Those who want to grumble take anything as an excuse.

See No. 426.

729. When pocket full, and bonkra full, 'ooman laugh.

730. Woman and wood never quarrel.

I.e. Women like to get all the wood they can to burn.

Wood.

731. Wood is wood, but mahoe is not mahogany.

All things are not what they seem.

Mahoe a commoner wood than mahogany.

Word.

732. Wud a' mout' no load 'pon head.

733. Man mus' die, but wud neber die.

Cf. "The word of the Lord endureth for ever" (*S. Peter*).

734. Wud mus' die, but man mus' lib.

735. Big wud bruk no man' jawbone.

See Nos. 142 and 420.

736. Big wud bruk nobody' 'kin.

Cf. Hard words break no bones.

Work.

737. Work no evil, it is de yeye dat coward.

I.e. A piece of work looks more difficult than it really is

Cf. The eyes are the first to be conquered (*Tacitus*).

See Nos. 121, 256 and 258.

THE END.

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